(2376) R

P860019-0092

February 5, 1980

Dear Mr. Florio:

Thank you for your letter of January 11 to Mr. Lowman on behalf of Mrs. Diane Dove who suggested Jonestown, Guyana as a resettlement site for Indochinese refugees.

We appreciate the concern for the welfare of the refugees which prompted Mrs. Dove's letter. We must point out that the decision to resettle refugees in Guyana rests solely with the government of that country.

Given Mrs. Dove's concern for the refugees, she may be interested to know that much progress has been made on the resettlement of refugees since the Tokyo summit in June and the U.N.-sponsored Geneva conference on refugees in July. Nations around the world have pledged to resettle more than 265,000 refugees a year. An additional $190 million has been pledged to support the operations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and Japan, in an extraordinary act of statesmanship, has promised to contribute 50 per cent of the UNHCR budget. The Philippines, in an equally extraordinary gesture, has offered a site for a refugee processing center to accommodate 50,000 refugees, thus helping to relieve the pressures on Malaysia and Thailand. Other countries have also acted magnanimously to ease the refugee crisis.

The United States, for its part, has taken a number of measures that we hope will provide substantial relief to the refugees and to the nations of first arrival in Southeast Asia. We have doubled the number of refugees that we will resettle in this country from 7,000 to 14,000 a month, and we have submitted legislation to the current session of Congress that would place our refugee admissions policy on a longer term basis. If enacted, this new legislation would establish for the first time a comprehensive program for refugee resettlement and assistance and would provide federal funding for such activities on a continuing basis. We have also submitted to the Congress several requests for additional funding to cover our

The Honorable
James J. Florio,
House of Representatives.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 2/27/87
[illegible] or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. [illegible] REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☒
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

increased contribution to the UNHCR, a substantial share of the cost of establishing new refugee processing centers in Southeast Asia, and an initial contribution to a proposed International Resettlement Fund designed to help developing countries absorb refugees.

In an effort to save lives at sea, the U.S. Navy has alerted all of its ships and aircraft in Southeast Asia to watch for refugees and to give all possible assistance to vessels in distress. Wherever feasible, they are altering their routes into the areas where refugees are likely to be located and spending the maximum time possible in those areas while still meeting operational requirements. In addition, four ships from the Military Sealift Command will soon assist in transporting refugees to new processing centers in Southeast Asia and will thus be in the same area, operating under these same guidelines.

We are also continuing our efforts to get other countries to increase their financial contributions and resettlement offers. We are urging nations to provide land or construction and financial help to build refugee processing centers and money for the International Resettlement Fund. We hope that all of these international efforts will convince the first-asylum countries to continue to offer safe haven to all arriving refugees while we search for permanent homes for them.

Sincerely,

PA/PC/CM:HHeilsnis:dj
X24933 1-30-80

H #014-1178

LPC: S/R: 10/7
H: E. Krizek

J. Brian Atwood
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

Enclosure:

Correspondence returned.